

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13

EUR-12 EB-08 TRSE-00 AID-05 DHA-02 ORM-02 OMB-01

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-----091851Z 089398 /73

R 091400Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9590

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GABORONE 0582

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

MASERU FOR AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, EPAP, MASS, PFOR, SREF, SWEL, UNSC, BC

SUBJECT: STATUS REPORT ON U.S.-BOTSWANA RELATIONS

1. THIS MESSAGE PROVIDES (A) A CHECKLIST OF THE PRINCIPAL CURRENT PROBLEMS AND ISSUES IN U.S.-BOTSWANA RELATIONS THAT, TAKEN TOGETHER, DESCRIBE AND ACCOUNT FOR THE DECLINING POSITION OF THE U.S.; AND (B) LIST AND ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO THE U.S. TO BEGIN TO REVERSE THE DECLINE.

A. GOB OFFICIALS GENERALLY ATTRIBUTE THE STALEMENT IN GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS ON ZIMBABWE TO YEARS OF U.S. INDIFFERENCE AND NEGLECT TOWARD SOUTHERN AFRICA ISSUES. THE FEELING HERE, EXTENDING TO THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOB, IS THAT, IF U.S. RESOLVED TO APPLY ITS AUTHORITY, IT HAS THE POWER AND INFLUENCE TO BRING ABOUT RESUMPTION OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE AND

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A PEACEFUL SOLUTION IN RHODESIA.

B. THE U.S. ABSTENTION ON BOTSWANA'S COMPLAINT IN THE UNSC ON JANUARY 14 IS THE LATEST PUBLIC ENTRY ON THE RECORD OF U.S.-GOB RELATIONS. DESPITE OUR EXPLANATIONS AND PROTESTATIONS, ABSTENTION IS CONSIDERED AN ACCURATE MANIFESTATION OF DEEP U.S. RESERVES ABOUT OPPOSING THE

SMITH REGIME AND EVEN AS EVIDENCE OF LUKEWARM SUPPORT FOR MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA.

C. THE U.S. IS BELIEVED TO BE DOING BUSINESS AS USUAL WITH SOUTH AFRICA, WHICH IS SEEN AS RESIDUAL SYMPATHY RESULTING FROM A SHARED ANTI-COMMUNISM AND A TRUE REFLECTION OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF U.S. BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT. IN THIS RESPECT THE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES BY LEADING U.S. CORPORATIONS DOING BUSINESS IN SOUTH AFRICA IS A HELPFUL DEVELOPMENT.

D. THE USSR (THROUGH THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN LUSAKA) HAS OFFERED TO MAKE ARMS AVAILABLE TO ANYONE FIGHTING THE SMITH REGIME. THE IMPROVEMENT IN THE SOVIET IMAGE IN THIS COUNTRY (AND REGION) HAS BEEN DESCRIBED BY A COLLEAGUE AS DRAMATIC AND HAS HAD CORRESPONDING EFFECT OF ERODING OURS.

E. SIMILARLY, MILITARY ASSISTANCE HAS ARRIVED HERE FROM PRC AT NO COST TO THE GOB. AMONG OFFICIALS WHO KNOW (AND THE NUMBER IS INCREASING) THIS IS STRONGLY BELIEVED TO ACCOUNT FOR THE SUBTLE (BUT PERCEPTIBLE) COOLING AND ABSENCE OF CUSTOMARY CANDOR IN DEALING WITH US. BY CONTRAST, U.S. (AND UK) DELAY IN RESPONDING TO GOB REQUEST TO PURCHASE RIFLES (400 OF THEM) IS REGARDED AS EVIDENCE OF FUNDAMENTAL U.S. DIS-INTEREST IN HELPING BOB IN ITS MILITARY CONFRONTATION WITH RHODESIAN REGIME.

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F. ATTITUDES CONCERNING RHODESIA HAVE POLARIZED AND CLEARLY FAVOR MILITANTS OVER THOSE PRESCRIBING PEACEFUL SOLUTION. IN ABSENCE OF MOVEMENT TOWARD SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS, THE U.S. FINDS ITSELF ON THE SIDE OF A DWINDLING MINORITY WITH MOMENTUM ON THE SIDE OF THE MILITANTS.

G. THE REAL POSSIBILITY EXISTS OF ANOTHER BOTSWANA-BEEF CRISIS EMERGING IN 1977 (SEE GABORONE 0455). ALTHOUGH THIS IS NOT STRICTLY A U.S. PROBLEM, IT IS A WESTERN ONE WHICH, TOGETHER WITH THE OTHER FACTORS CITED ABOVE, COULD CONTRIBUTE TO A DECLINE IN OUR POSITION HERE.

2. OPPORTUNITIES TO REVERSE THE TIDE ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A. FARAH MISSION: AT THE TIME OF THE UNSC DEBATE, U.S. SPOKESMEN DESCRIBED MBOTSWANA'S CONCERNS AS 7.S. CONCERNS AND OUR INTENTION "TO PURSUE CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF BOTSWANA" WHILE EXPRESS-

ING SYMPATHY FOR GOB PLIGHT. TO DIMINISH THE EFFECTS OF THE ABSTENTION, IT IS NECESSARY TO MAKE CLEAR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE THE USG'S INTENTION TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FARAH MISSION. ACTION REQUESTED: SEE SEPTELS REQUESTING DEPARTMENT AND AID PREPARE NOW TO ASSIST BOTSWAN, IN A MANNER REFLECTING OUR POLICY GOALS, BY HELPING IMPLEMENT THE FARAH RECOMMENDATIONS (SEE GABORONE 0509; GABORONE 0546, AND GABORONE 581.

B. REFUGEES: BOTSWANA IS PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO NEARLY 2,000 REFUGEES. THE U.S. HAS MADE AVAILABLE ONE MILLION DOLLARS TO THE UNHCR FOR REFUGEES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, INCLUDING PARTIAL FINANCIAL BURDEN RESULTING FROM THE REFUGEES IN BOTSWANA.

ACTION REQUESTED: THE FARAH MISSION IS PLANNING TO
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REQUEST ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE, E.G. FINANCIAL SUPPORT, FOOD AND EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATIONS (E.G. TENTS), AND ALSO SCHOLARSHIPS. ADDITIONAL BILATERAL HELP IS ESSENTIAL TO SUPPLEMENT OUR MULTILATERAL AID AND DEMONSTRATE OUR DIRECT SYMPATHY FOR THE GOB AND FOR THE REFUGEES.

C. THE REFUGEE PROBLEM HAS HAD AN INDIRECT IMPACT ON EXISTING EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS, PRINCIPALLY UNIVERSITY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS. THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT BODY IS THE AVANT GARDE OF OPINION ON SOUTHERN AFRICAN PROBLEMS AND IS GRADUALLY BEING RADICALIZED, IN PART BY REFUGEES. ONE MILLION DOLLARS IS AVAILABLE FOR THE THREE BEST UNIVERSITIES FOR THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR (FY77).

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 GABORONE 0582

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

MASERU FOR AMBASSADOR

ACTION REQUESTED: PROMPT U.S. ACTION (A) TO APPROVE
THE GOB'S REUEST FOR SOME THIRTY THOUSAND DOLLARS IN
LIBRARY REFERENCE BOOKS, AND (B) TO AUTHORIZE US TO
RESPOND WITHOUT DELAY TO NEW GOB EMERGENCY NEEDS TO
HELP CARE FOR REFUGEES.

E. THE GOB'S TOP PRORITIES, REAFFIRMED BY THE
FARAH MISSIO, INCLUDE THE TARRING OF THE BOT-ZAM ROAD.
NO OTHER AID PROJECT, PRESENT OR FORESEEN, WILL HAVE A
COMPARABLE IMPACT AS EVIDENCING U.S. SUPPORT FOR THE
GOB IN ITS PRESENT CHALLENGES.

ACTION REQUESTED: PRIORITY CONSIDERATION FOR HARD
SUFACING THE BOT-ZAM ROAD AS OUR NUMBER ONE AID PRIIORTY
PROJECT:

E. THE RESTORATION OF SELF-HELP WOULD ENABLE
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US TO GENERATE AT LEAST A WAVE OF GRASSROOTS SYMPATHY
(WHERE IT COUNTS MOST IN THE LONG RUN) TO HELP UNDERCUT
CRITICS AND MITIGATE THE CRITICISMS OF THE U.S. SOME
TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS WORTH OF REQUESTS FOR SELF-
HELP PROJECTS ARE ON FILE.

ACTION REQUESTED: FUNDS TO FULFILL HALF OF THESE PROJECTS
AS A WAY OF PROVIDING A NEEDED GRASSROOTS IMPACT.
(CURRENT INFORMATION ON PROSPECTS FOR RESUMPTION OF
SELF-HELP PROGRAM WOULD BE APPRECIATE).

F. MOVES TO RESCIND THE BYRD AMENDMENT ARE FOLLOWED
WITH GREAT INTERST IN THIS COUNTRY, NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF
THE ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF CHROME TO RHODESIA BUT BE-
CAUSE OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT.

ACTION REQUESTED: APPROPRIATE REPORTING OF THE PROS-
PECTS AND LIKELY TIMING OF THE REPEAL OF THE BYRD

AMENDMENT AND PRESS GUIDANCE AS TO ITS IMPACT.

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